IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) An electric appliance, comprising:
a plurality of operating elements, each operating element actuatable by a user in an actuatable state and not actuatable by the user in a non-actuatable state, each operating element including a respective status display device; and
a control logic unit coupled to the operating elements, the control logic unit configured to detect a user input, change an operating state of the electrical appliance according to the user input, and activate the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivate the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state.

15. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein each status display device is a light source.

16. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, further comprising a housing, the housing including a surface, wherein the operating elements are arranged on the surface.

17. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein a status display device is in an illuminated state when a respective operating element is in the actuatable state and the status display device is in a non-

illuminated state when the respective operating element is in the non-actuatable state.

18. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 17, further comprising a housing including a surface on which the operating elements are arranged, wherein a status display device in a non-illuminated state has a color similar to a color of the surface.

19. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 17, wherein the control logic unit is further configured to switch each status display device that is in the illuminated state into the non-illuminated state after a pre-determined time interval elapses following detection of the user input.

20. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 19, wherein the control logic unit is further configured to maintain in the non-illuminated state the status display devices for the operating elements that are in the non-actuatable state, if the user attempts to actuate an operating element in the non-actuatable state.

21. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the operating elements comprise capacitive proximity sensors.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, further comprising an acoustic signal transmitter that delivers an audible signal when an actuation of an operating element has been detected.

24. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the operating elements are combined with an alphanumeric display in an assembly.

25. (Previously Presented) The electric appliance according to claim 14, wherein the electric appliance includes a refrigerating appliance.

26. (Previously Presented) A refrigerator comprising:
a housing having an interior chamber;
a door coupled to the housing for opening and closing the interior chamber;
a control panel, the control panel including a display window for displaying information and a plurality of buttons for receiving input from a user;
each button including a respective light source and a respective proximity sensor, the proximity sensor configured to detect contact of the button by the user;
each respective light source being in an illuminated state when the button is actuatable by the user and in a non-illuminated state when the button is not actuatable by the user; and
a control logic unit electrically connected to the control panel, the control logic unit configured to control operation of the refrigerator, receive input signals from the buttons, send output signals to control the display window and light sources, adjust an operating state of the refrigerator in response to a user input, and activate the light source of at least a first button into the illuminated state and deactivate the light source of at least a second button into the non-illuminated state in response to the user input.

27. (Previously Presented) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the housing includes:
a freezer compartment including the first button, wherein the first button is for controlling the freezer compartment; and

a refrigerating compartment including the second button, wherein the second button is for controlling the refrigerating compartment.

28. (Previously Presented) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the buttons include a select button for selecting an operating feature, an increment button for increasing the selected operating feature, and a decrement button for decreasing the selected operating feature.

29. (Previously Presented) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the display window is configured to display a list of operating features and allow the user to scroll through the list of operating features.

30. (Previously Presented) The refrigerator according to claim 26, wherein the display window includes an LCD display and a luminescent screen.

31. (Previously Presented) The refrigerator according to claim 26, further comprising a door switch, the door switch coupled to the control logic unit and configured to sense if the door is open.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) An electric appliance, comprising:

a plurality of operating elements, each operating element actuatable by a user in an actuatable state and not actuatable by the user in a non-actuatable state, each operating element including a respective status display device;

a control logic unit coupled to the operating elements, the control logic unit configured to detect a user input, change an operating state of the electrical appliance according to the user input, and activate the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivate the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state, wherein a status display device is in an illuminated state when a respective operating element is in the actuatable state and the status display device is in a non-illuminated state when the respective operating element is in the non-actuatable state, the control logic unit is further configured to switch each status display device that is in the illuminated state into the non-illuminated state after a pre-determined time interval elapses following detection of the user input and the control logic unit is further configured to maintain in the non-illuminated state the status display devices for the operating elements that are in the non-actuatable state, if the user attempts to actuate an operating element in the non-actuatable state; and

a housing, the housing including an interior chamber that is closed by a door, wherein the control logic unit is further configured to maintain in the non-illuminated state the status display devices of the operating elements that are in the non-actuatable state, if the door is opened.